

Hello, my name is Jeff Hudgins; I am a real estate broker from East Lansing. I am here today to speak in support of HB's 5294-5296 which allow for a 30 day grace period to correct zoning violations and place a cap on fines for zoning violations.

I am an owner of rental property in East Lansing. In that capacity I have had occasion to witness first hand how onerous the tremendous fines for zoning infractions have been on colleagues of mine.

Whether one is a small landlord or a large concern, it is very difficult to keep abreast of rules and codes which are constantly being changed and in flux. That is why the proposed HB'S 5294-96 are so good.

They provide for an incentive on the part of the municipality to correct a behavior as quickly as it is discovered. If one of the true purpose of zoning law is to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens then a quick resolution to a situation once discovered is the best solution. Unfortunately that is not how it works under current law where I own a business. Once a problem is discovered it benefits the city to delay bringing action to correct the situation. The longer the violation continues, the higher the fine.

Furthermore, there are retroactive clauses that date the fines back to when the earliest violation occurred in spite of the fact that the property owner may never have known they were in violation. Under this present arrangement the fines are often huge.

One of my colleagues had a fine for \$78,000 levied against his property!! In the end he elected to surrender the property to the city rather than pay the fines. This is not an isolated incident. I know of other property owners who have paid fines and fees of tens of thousands of dollars.

HB'S 5294-96 make sense because they seek to correct behavior quickly and expeditiously without the potential for abuse that leads to the effective taking of real property. There can be no other explanation for such tremendous fines other than to raise money for the city.

The time to act on these bills is now. They are timely and fair to both sides. They provide for a prompt solution to zoning issues. I will go out on the limb a bit and make a prediction. If these zoning issues are not dealt with now, member will be hearing from constituents in multiple towns across the state within a couple of years recounting the same kind of stories you heard described by me today.

Thank you